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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON AIR TRANSPORT
(Dakar, 2-5 December 1985)

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A. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The first meeting of the Technical Committee on Air Transport in Africa, which has been established pursuant to the Mbabane Declaration on Air Transport in Africa, was held from 2 to 5 December 1985 in Dakar, Senegal, at the headquarters of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC).

B. PARTICIPATION

The following members of the Committee were present:

Representatives of Civil Aviation Administrations

- Mr. J.N. Kahuki, representing the Eastern region
- Mr. A. Daoudi, representing the Northern region
- Mr. M.B. Mohammed, representing the Western region
- Mr. M. Mulongo, representing the Central region

Representatives of Airlines

- Mr. V.J. Gbaguidi, representing the Western region
- Mr. F. Banga Eboumi, representing the Central region
- Mr. N. Raqheb, representing the Northern region
- Mr. Bekele Wolde, representing the Eastern region

Representatives of international organizations

ECA: Mr. M. Bongoy, Chief, Transport, Communications and Tourism Division

OAU: Mr. Y.C. Afanou, Head, Transport and Communications Division

AFCAC: Mr. V. Savane, President
Mr. E. Lombolou, Secretary General

The following members from the southern African region were unable to attend:

- Mr. R.L. Bwalya, representative of the airlines
- Mr. A.J. Jumbe, representative of the Civil Aviation Administrations

The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) was not represented.

C. OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. Mr. Vassiriki Savane, President of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), opened the meeting and reminded the Committee Members that it had been through ECA's initiative of organizing the Mbabane Conference, that the Mbabane Declaration had been born through the wisdom and imagination of Africans. He pointed out that air transport by its very nature constituted a privileged vehicle for co-operation among the countries of the continent.

4. In the world of air transport today, he added, regionalism was gaining ground: Europe, Latin America and Asia were striving to resolve their specific problems through multilateral machineries. There was no reason why Africa which had the necessary skills and which was united by an unshakable will to accept the challenges facing it could not do likewise in its own interest. He concluded by stressing that success would be achieved only if Africans relied on their own values.

5. Mr. M. Bongoy, Chief of the Division of Transport, Communications and Tourism of ECA, stated that the creation of the Committee had been a response to the real concern of establishing a framework of co-operation, co-ordination and consultation between airlines and civil aviation departments with a view to developing air services in Africa and to facilitating the economic and physical integration of the continent. He referred to the poor quality of intra-African links by mentioning that only 20 per cent of the possible connections had been established. The consequences of such a situation were the low level of traffic, the insufficiency of the development of intra-African tourism and the poor quality of air services and facilitation. To reverse this tendency, ECA was convinced that individual solutions and separate actions would not lead to an improvement of the present situation, but there should be a profound change of mentalities in tackling the problems of air transport in Africa and in developing our projects and working methodologies.

6. Africans should therefore look for and propose African solutions to their different problems in order to assess in 1988 (the end of the UNTACDA) the impact of the efforts made. Mr. Bongoy stressed that this first meeting had been organized thanks to concerted efforts of AFCAC and ECA, which testified to the quality of working relations existing between the two organizations.

7. He concluded by thanking the experts who had left their important concerns and duties to participate in the proceedings of the Committee, conclusions of which were expected with impatience.

8. Mr. Y.C. Afanou the representative of OAU, in his statement stressed the essentially technical nature of the Committee. He also indicated that most of the members of the Committee were experts in the field of civil aviation and expressed the hope that the proceedings would lead, on each of the items on the agenda, to specific and relevant decisions. He concluded his statement by thanking the various participants for their individual and collective commitment to be development of orderly and co-ordinated air service in Africa.

9. In his statement, Mr. B. Lombolou, the Secretary-General of AFCAC, highlighted the work of the Commission in the field of aeronautical policy, studies, co-operation activities and air fares and rates.

10. He indicated that AFCAC's active participation in the activities of the Technical Committee derived from the will to set up in Africa and by Africans the conditions likely to ensure a resounding success in the harmonious development of air transport in Africa.

D. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Agenda Item 2: Election of the Bureau of the Committee

11. Following the proposal made by the President of AFCAC, the Committee unanimously elected the following members to serve as the Bureau for three years:

Chairman	:	Mr. J.N. Kahuki
Vice-Chairman	:	Mr. A. Daoudi
Rapporteur	:	Mr. J. Gbaguidi

The task of secretariat of the meeting was entrusted to ECA.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the Agenda

12. The Committee adopted the following Agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Establishing a common African approach on the free exchange of the first and second freedoms of the air

5. Centralized data collection, research and analysis on air transport in Africa.

6. Ways and means of developing the co-ordination of flight schedules within Africa

7. Promoting multinational and/or joint operation of air services and studies on developing the existing or possible air routes in Africa

8. Date and venue of the next meeting

9. Any other business

10. Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Establishing a common African approach on the free exchange of the first and second freedoms of the air

13. In the absence of the representative of AFRAA who was supposed to present a paper on the subject, the meeting nevertheless went ahead to discuss the subject.

14. It was considered necessary to discuss each freedom of the air separately.

15. The first freedom regarding the freedom to overfly the territory of another country did not pose any problem and there was no need for further discussion.

16. In connexion with the second freedom (the right for an airline to make a technical stop without any traffic rights), two aspects had to be considered. The first aspect was the purely technical stop. The second aspect was where the technical stop was combined with some traffic rights or commerical advantage. In the first case there was no justification for the denial of the right. Although, in practice, bilateral agreements are usually purported to grant purely second freedom, reference to the annex outlining the details of the operation of the agreement shows that, quite often the exercise of the right was linked to the frequency of service, thus limiting the number of stops in a given country to the frequency of a service. The greater problem was where the exercise of a technical stop was coupled with the third and fourth freedoms or some other commercial value. In such a case the Committee felt that the granting of the freedom ought to be a subject of negotiation although it favoured the liberal granting of the freedom. The decisions reached by the Committee may be summarized as follows:

- The second freedom, when it is used alone should be granted automatically;

- As regards the second freedom coupled with the third and fourth freedoms, the Committee recognized that African traffic was often too thin to warrant the introduction of a service on a route without this combination. There were therefore two schools of thought, namely, those who thought the combination should be granted freely and those who thought it should be a subject of negotiation. The Committee, therefore, decided that a study should be undertaken by the airlines, members of the committee to identify the various ways of compensating the granting of the combination of second with third and fourth freedoms and to report to the next meeting of the Committee.

- The Secretariat, in collaboration with AFCAC, should gather information on cases where the granting of the second freedom combined with third and fourth had been denied.

Agenda Item 5: Centralized data collection, research and analysis on air transport in Africa

17. Introducing this agenda item, the Secretary of AFCAC indicated that the Commission was contemplating the implementation of a data bank project which would be developed in relation with the PADIS System of the ECA. The objective of this project was to make available in Africa the information on air transport necessary for studies and to process it locally. In that connection, AFCAC planned to acquire a mini-computer.

18. The study of the AFCAIS System (African Civil Aviation Information System) would be conducted with the financial assistance of the OAU within the framework of the actions aimed at reinforcing the participatory capacity of its specialized agencies in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action. ICAO, ECA, IATA and ITA would be consulted before the execution of the study.

19. The setting-up of the AFCAIS System implied an adaptation to the utilization plan of the PADIS decentralized information retrieval system whose software was installed at the ECA headquarters at Addis Ababa.

20. The discussions that followed the introduction of this agenda item revealed that:

- The AFCAC project would not be operational until 1987; it however had good prospects of being funded by the European Development Fund through the ACP Group of States
- Airlines which had their own systems could be connected to the AFCAIS system;
- The possibilities offered by ICAO and IATA in the field of centralized collection of data on air transport would also be used;
- Airlines of some regions were already meeting regularly to exchange traffic information. This information could subsequently constitute an input into the AFCAIS system.

21. In conclusion, the Committee decided:

(1) that it should be informed of the progress being made in connexion with AFCAC's study especially with regard to the ways and means of financing it;

(2) that a survey be conducted by AFCAC and AFRAA on the nature of statistics and information necessary for the development of air transport activities in Africa;

(3) that Air Gabon, in collaboration with Air Afrique, should present to the next meeting a paper on the current methods used by airlines operating the coastal routes to harmonize their schedules.

Agenda Item 6: Ways and means of developing the co-ordination of flights schedules in Africa

22. Under this agenda item, two working papers were presented, one by ECA and the other by AFCAC.

23. The representative of the ECA Secretariat indicated that in document DEC/TRANSCOM/AIR/4 there was a summary of the various studies conducted by ECA. These studies revealed that despite the efforts made by everybody, African air services were still underdeveloped. Thus it was often the case that African travellers transited through Europe to go from one point to another within Africa. The consequences of this were many among which could be mentioned the retardation of economic development and intra-African trade.

24. Actions complementary to the efforts made were necessary to change this situation. The ECA was wondering whether it was not necessary to add to concertation, a policy for promotion of bold and efficient genuine African co-operation? This policy should take account of the establishment of operating agreements, facilitation at airports, tariff matters and the interchange of crews.

25. The document presented contained suggestions relating to subregional consultations in the establishment of flight schedules and joint publication by each subregion of the schedules of African airlines, etc.

26. Introducing the document prepared by AFCAC, the Secretary General of the Commission gave the background of the actions undertaken by AFCAC in this field. He recalled Resolution 57-5 of the Seventh Plenary Session of AFCAC and the Seminar on the Optimum Development of Air Services in Africa organized in Addis Ababa in 1982. The Secretary General indicated further that AFCAC's document and that of ECA tackled the subject in the same spirit.

27. The discussions that followed revealed that as a first step, action should be limited to improving what already existed. To this end, airlines should be encouraged to co-operate and co-ordinate their schedules. In addition, it appeared necessary to stress the advantages of accepting compromise solutions for the sake of mutual interest.

28. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee decided on the following:

(a) To urge African airlines to participate in flight scheduling meetings organized at the regional level;

(b) To urge African airlines to participate in flight scheduling meetings organized by AFRAA;

(c) To request Air Gabon, working in collaboration with Air Afrique, to present to the next meeting a paper on the current methods used by the airlines operating the West African coastal routes to harmonize their flight schedules.

Agenda Item 7: Promoting multinational or jointly operated airline and studies on developing existing or possible air routes in Africa

29. This item was introduced by representatives of ECA and AFCAC.

30. The paper presented by ECA emphasized the fact that Africa had too many small airlines which were generally not viable and had to be subsidized to be kept afloat. The only option left for African airlines if they wished to operate profitably was for them to co-operate. The paper then went on to propose some possible co-operation arrangements.

31. The AFCAC paper, while treating the same theme, started with recalling previous efforts to create multinational airlines many of which had collapsed. Today, the only successful case is that of Air Afrique. It was generally accepted that larger airlines had the advantage of economies of scale over the smaller ones and that bargaining with other parties as a group offered distinct advantages over bargaining as small and weak individual countries. In recognition of the potential strength of an airline having as members more than one country, the suggestion had been made that it might be preferable to have a Pan-African airline having as its members all African countries. It had subsequently been recognized that a Pan-African airline project could only be a long-term one while in the short- and medium-term efforts should be concentrated on the subregional level. AFCAC and OAU, in consultation with ECA and ICAO, had therefore, prepared a project document, for possible financing by UNDP, for a study to examine various co-operation efforts that might ultimately culminate in a Pan-African airline.

32. The representative of the Ethiopian Airlines gave a brief outline of a project that his airline was promoting which consisted in attempting to find a mechanism whereby a number of small airlines might be able to utilize their traffic rights with European countries by pooling their efforts to acquire modern aircraft for service on the European routes. The project had the support, in principle, of an encouraging number of airlines and was being pursued vigorously. Ethiopian Airlines, however, considered it premature to give a detailed account of the project prior to a meeting of the airlines concerned at which the final form of the project would be agreed.

33. After debate, the meeting agreed to split the subject into three for the purpose of making decisions. The split was as follows:

- Promotion of multinational airlines;
- Development of existing routes;
- Development of new routes.

34. In connection with the promotion of multinational airlines, the Committee took account of the considerable work that had already been done by AFCAC in this field. It further recognized that a Pan-African airline was not realistic in the near future. A gradual approach was more realistic starting with lower levels of co-operation such as joint operations, joint use of maintenance and training facilities, harmonization of legislation with respect to personnel licensing and maintenance standards, etc. It therefore decided as follows:

- For the next meeting ECA should prepare a paper on the ECOWAS study so that the Committee might determine whether its recommendations might be applicable to other parts of the continent;

- The AFCAC secretariat should take an inventory of what has been done so far, to what extent resolutions have been implemented and if they have not been, what the constraints had been. The inventory should include all co-operative arrangements existing among African airlines;

- Account should be taken, when reviewing all the co-operative arrangements, of the efforts being made at the subregional level such as those being made by the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA).

35. With regard to the development of existing or new air routes the following decisions were taken:

- Factors impeding the development of expanded air services among African countries, following the preliminary identification of those factors by AFCAC in its paper prepared for Agenda Item 6, should be identified;

- The Committee would try to organize meetings of airlines and Directorates of Civil Aviation of countries lying along the major air axes that had already been identified. The purpose of the meetings would be to identify the real obstacles facing airlines wishing to start services along the axes and for airlines and Directors of Civil to jointly try to find solutions;

- It was preferable that airlines met separately first and only subsequently jointly with the Directors of Civil Aviation;

- Every effort would be made to hold the eight meetings for the four axes already identified in 1986. If that was not possible, some of the meetings would have to be held in 1987.

Agenda Item 8: Any other business

36. Under this Agenda item, the Committee approved its Rules of Procedure which appear as Appendix 1 to this report.

Agenda Item 9: Date and venue of the next meeting of the Committee

37. The Committee decided to hold its next meeting at Addis Ababa within six months following the holding of this meeting. The Secretariat was requested to inform the members of the Committee of the date chosen at least four months in advance.

38. The Committee also adopted the following recommendation:

E. RECOMMENDATION

After noting the importance of the actions to be undertaken, the Committee requests ECA to allocate funds in its budget for funding these actions and further request airlines to issue to Committee members free tickets with a view to facilitating their travel. It also recommends that its members should serve a six-year term which may be renewed.

Agenda Item 10: Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting

39. The draft report was adopted after a few amendments.

40. The President of the Committee and the ECA Chief of Transport, Communications and Tourism Division pronounced closing statements.

ANNEX-I

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON AIR TRANSPORT IN AFRICA

ARTICLE I

(a) In accordance with the Mbabane Declaration on Air Transport in Africa, the Technical Committee on Air Transport in Africa shall comprise:

(i) One representative each from ECA, OAU and AFRAA;

(ii) Five members representing aeronautical authorities in the five regions of OAU;

(iii) Five members representing airlines in the regions of OAU.

(b) The Committee may co-opt other members as it considers necessary.

ARTICLE II

The Bureau of the Committee shall be made up of three members, namely, a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Rapporteur. ECA shall serve as secretariat for meetings of the Committee.

ARTICLE III

The Committee shall meet at least twice a year and the secretariat shall convene the meetings in consultation with the Chairman.

ARTICLE IV

An extraordinary meeting of the Committee may be held at the instance of the Bureau, provided, however, that two-thirds of the members of the Committee agree. An extraordinary meeting may also be held at the request of two-thirds of the members of the Committee.

ARTICLE V

The quorum for the meetings of the Committee shall be eight members.

ARTICLE VI

(a) Before each meeting of the Committee, the secretariat shall prepare, in consultation with the Chairman, a draft agenda which shall be circulated to the members of the Committee at least 45 days before the date of the meeting.

(b) As far as possible, working papers shall also be circulated to members of the Committee in advance of meetings.

ARTICLE VII

At the beginning of each meeting, the Committee shall adopt the agenda of the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Decisions of the Committee shall, as far as possible, be made by consensus. Where, however, a consensus cannot be reached, the question shall be put to a vote, whereupon the decision will be taken by a simple majority of affirmative votes. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

ARTICLE IX

The proceedings of the meetings of the Committee shall be recorded in the form of a report which shall be adopted at the end of each meeting.

ARTICLE X

If a member of the Committee is absent for three consecutive meetings, he shall be replaced by another member of the region that he represents.

ARTICLE XI

The members of the Bureau shall be elected from among the members of the Committee enumerated in Article I.

ARTICLE XII

The Chairman shall preside over the meeting of the Committee and the Bureau. In his absence the Vice-Chairman shall preside.

ARTICLE XIII

If the rapporteur is unable to perform his duties, the Committee shall appoint, from among its other members, a rapporteur for the particular meeting.

ARTICLE XIV

The term of office of the members of the Bureau shall be three years which may be renewed.

ARTICLE XV

(a) The Bureau shall ensure the continuation of the activities of the Committee between its meetings.

(b) The Bureau shall meet whenever the need arises.

(c) Members of the Bureau shall individually or collectively undertake sensitization and explanatory missions to States, airlines or other relevant organizations within the framework of the implementation of the measures adopted by the Authorities referred to in Chapter IV of the Mbabane Declaration on Air Transport in Africa.

ARTICLE XVI

The working languages of the Committee shall be English and French and all the proceedings shall be conducted and all documents for meetings shall be produced in both languages.

ARTICLE XVII

These Rules of Procedure may be amended at any meeting of the Committee except that a proposed amendment shall be circulated by the proposer to the other members at least 45 days before the meetings at which it shall be tabled. An amendment shall come into force if it is supported by eight votes.

ANNEX II

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON AIR TRANSPORT FOR 1986

1. To identify the problems related to the granting of the second freedom of the air.

2. To identify the routes necessary for the physical and economic integration of Africa and to define the problems related to the development of these routes.

3. To propose and to undertake activities to solve these problems in order to develop the routes.

4. To organize two meetings on the first two routes to be defined after economic studies.

5. To organize a meeting of the Technical Committee at Addis Ababa.

6. To prepare a summary of studies undertaken in Africa on the promotion of co-operation, joint operations and establishment of multinational airlines.

7. To continue the AFCAC study on centralized collection of data on air transport.

8. To identify the needs of airlines with regard to statistical data.